

National Coastal Condition Report II

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The purpose of EPA's National Coastal Assessment (NCA) program is to estimate the status and trends of the condition of the nation's coastal resources on state, regional, and national scales. During 1999-2003, 100% of the nation's estuarine waters were representatively sampled at over 4500 locations using indicators and indices describing the benthic community, fish community, water quality, sediment and tissue contamination, sediment toxicity, and SAV extent/condition. These measures were developed over a decade and include core (standardized across the program) and developmental and research (being validated or tested in field and laboratory) indicators. The first national report card on coastal conditions based on these indicators was published in 2001 and was based on data from 1990-1996. The next report card is based on surveys completed in 1999-2000 using a newer, more inclusive suite of indicators. Changes in these attributes, as well as condition, from the early 1990s to the early 2000s will be examined and specific comparisons of differences among the indicators used and developed will be made. A discussion of the utility and benefits of the indicator research to the further development of monitoring surveys is provided in terms of planning, required evaluations of resource condition (305b), listing of impaired waters (303d), development of action plans (TMDLs), and permitting.